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TheHighlander

Thursday April 9 2026 | Issue 734

INSIDE: CANADA POST CHANGES PAGE 3 FREE

Minden Hills mayor Bob Carter has a look at the Gull River in the downtown April 7. *Photo by Lisa Gervais.*

Minden watches water levels

By Lisa Gervais

Minden Hills mayor Bob Carter calls up his preferred weather app on his smartphone and checks the forecast for the next week.

When it comes to the potential for flooding in downtown Minden, he said it's all about the weather – and the water content in the snowpack.

The emergency management team – which comprises Parks Canada, the Ministry of Natural Resources, and townships such as Minden Hills, meets weekly as needed this time of year. If there is nothing much to talk about, the MNR simply presents its watershed conditions' statement.

Overlooking the Gull River April 7, Carter said, "right now, the water coming through here is really about normal." The mayor added most of the lower lakes have been, because of drought conditions, still running below average "so, you can look at that as storage space."

However, he checked Kennisis Lake April 6 and said levels were rising. "The problem is, three days after Kennisis goes

Continued **'Trent-Severn'** on page 2

County puts government changes under the microscope

By Lisa Gervais

An Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN) affordability and governance structure study for the County of Haliburton would investigate "credible governance alternatives" to the current upper-tier and four lower-tier system, CAO Gary Dyke told council at its April 8 meeting.

Dyke said operating five separate municipal organizations for a permanent population of 20,500 people results in duplication of several administrative functions. He added it restricts regional planning, creates inconsistent regulatory environments, slows response time for residents, and limits the County's ability to realize sustained administrative savings.

He acknowledged the 2022 service delivery review identified several opportunities to potentially consolidate services for greater efficiency.

"However, a deeper, independent analysis would be needed to quantify savings, identify service-level impacts, and establish a realistic implementation plan."

At yesterday's meeting, Dyke received unanimous support for the study. Warden Dave Burton will write the minister of municipal affairs and housing for support – with the cost estimated at $100,000 to $150,000 - and to be completed by the end of this July. Dyke stressed any changes would be considered by the new, 2026-2030, council.

He said the need for change became clear during difficult 2026 budget

Continued **'Current'** on page 2

Highlander news

Current financial model 'no longer sustainable'

Continued from page 1

deliberations. Many of the financial pressures are out of the County's control; having to pay 35-40 per cent of the tax rate increase to external bodies, such as the City of Kawartha Lakes for social services, Lakelands Public Health, Haliburton County Public Library, the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation, health professional recruitment, and the Haliburton Highlands Outdoors Association - leaving less for core township costs such as roads and bridges. He further estimated 98 per cent of taxes come from residents.

"The current model … is not sustainable and brings significant risk to the County and the community. Risks that could result in decreasing levels of service and a greater burden on local households. The model requires review," Dyke said.

The detailed study will explore options for the County's future that will also quantify current and future fiscal exposure, identify realistic implementation options, and secure provincial support.

County CAO Gary Dyke presented the report to council. *Photo by Lisa Gervais*

Risks with status quo

With household incomes 17 per cent below the provincial median - $66,000 after-tax according to the 2021 Census – high child poverty rates, low youth income, the high cost of housing, and 18 per cent facing food insecurity, Dyke said the community is highly sensitive to tax and fee increases.

He said there are risks to maintaining the status quo, such as ongoing structural inefficiencies that could lead to municipal service cuts, deferred infrastructure renewal work, or increasing the tax burden on the community.

"Independent scenario modelling can evaluate options ranging from targeted shared-services and functional consolidations to a transition to a single-tier governance model, providing clear forecasts of tax and levy impacts over five, 10 and 20-year horizons." He added the study would identify one-time implementation and transition costs.

"A comprehensive study will strengthen any provincial funding request and demonstrate that local measures to 'get our house in order' have been thoroughly examined."

Dyke added "lower-tier municipalities will be formally integrated into the information gathering and assessment phases as active contributors and co-analysts. This will include providing local data (financials, service levels, asset inventories), participating in stakeholder interviews and focus groups, hosting community engagement events when appropriate, and contributing local expertise to validate modelling and scenario testing."

Unanimous support

Burton said council directed the staff report "in the best interests of the community.

"A governance review provides us with an opportunity to step back, take a comprehensive look at how we operate, and ask whether our current structures are serving us as well as they could or should. The goal is to build a clear understanding of what is working well, where there may be gaps, may be challenges, and what opportunities exist in improvement. This is an opportunity to shape the future of how we govern and ultimately how we serve the people."

Deputy warden Liz Danielsen said she was pleased to see council moving in this direction. "We looked at service delivery, became bogged down, we are all facing serious pressures."

Without the study even underway, Coun. Murray Fearrey said he was worried change could add $7-8 million-a-year to the tax base. He said the province might respond that Haliburton County townships should be amalgamated with larger regional government, such as Peterborough. "I fear we could lose our autonomy here."

Coun. Cec Ryall said they could learn a lot from the health unit merger, in which the province financially assisted the process. Council unanimously endorsed the recommendation, 7-0, with coun. Lisa Schell not in attendance.

Trent-Severn Waterway anticipates rising lake and river levels

Continued from page 1

up, the water runs into the Gull River into downtown Minden.

"Everything is the weather. If you have warm days, cold nights, everything goes smoothly. You get a weekend where it goes to 20 C and it rains" not so much.

Looking at his weather forecast, he said he did not see anything "super special." Nothing worried him in particular, although warmer temperatures are coming.

Carter said the snowpack up north has a high-water content. Parks Canada upgraded their sensor units to measure not just the depth, but the water content.

Carter added so far, he is feeling "okay" that Minden won't be flooded. "But you get some fluke weather, and then it's really difficult."

For now, he said the Burnt and Gull Rivers are both flowing normally. He said dams are open so there is not much they can do. "It comes down to when do you close it to make sure you have water through the summer."

Carter said there have been improvements with real-time sensors on every lake so the Trent Severn Waterway knows the depth. They have a flow sensor on the Gull River.

"They've got an awful lot more data that they can analyze. They do a really good job this time of year. They are working day and night watching it."

The TSW forecast for April 8 said with the onset of snowmelt and significant rain amounts, water levels and flows are rising rapidly in northern areas. Snow amounts still remain in the northernmost areas of the Gull River and Burnt River systems. Most lake levels on the Gull River and Burnt River systems remain above average and are rising due to melt, accelerated by warm temperatures and significant amounts of received rainfall. Most central lakes are above average and are rising. It went on to say flows on the Gull River will increase as a result of upstream operational adjustments in response to received precipitation. Flows on the Burnt River have peaked but are expected to increase again with forecasted precipitation and ongoing melt.

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THIS WEEK:

Meet our New Reporter - Introducing Adam Frisk

The Haliburton Post Office is pictured on April 6. *Photo by Adam Frisk.*

Union blasts Canada Post restructuring

By Adam Frisk
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

It appears that Canada Post is moving forward with its restructuring plan, which includes several proposed cost-saving measures, including the end of door-to-door mail delivery and the possibility of post office closures.

Last week, the Crown corporation announced that it is moving forward with the transformation plan, as directed by the federal government last year, which includes the transition to community mailboxes. While the latest announcement doesn't directly affect the Minden, Haliburton and Wilberforce areas, since they don't have letter carriers, it opens the door to the potential of having postal outlets shuttered, the union said.

"We continue to work closely with the government on the details of our proposed transformation plan. At the same time, given the government's direction to begin taking initial steps, we are reaching out to our bargaining agents to consult on our approach to several proposed changes," Canada Post said in a March 30 statement to *The Highlander*. "These proposed changes include converting the remaining addresses that still receive delivery at the door to community mailboxes and modernizing our retail network."

The announcement comes as the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) is in the middle of a ratification vote. Local union president Kelly Lawr blasted last week's announcement, calling it a "complete s***show."

"It's absolutely ridiculous," she said.

Lawr said that the government has had Canada Post's proposed changes for about four months, only to end up releasing it now during the ratification process.

Canada Post said it would be working with the federal government "delivery standards for letter mail, which will require amendments to the Canadian Postal Service Charter."

"Canada Post has reached an important turning point," the Crown corporation said. "Our transformation will strengthen the postal service, allow us to be a better partner for businesses, and help us meet our dual mandate of delivering for all Canadians in a way that is financially self-sustainable."

The proposed transformation also opens the door to the closure of rural, small-scale, postal outlets. Lawr pointed at Kinmount and Burnt River as high-risk locations that could be shuttered. She said that because both of these locations operate with only one route, they would be "top of the list" for closure, forcing residents to travel further to access postal services.

"It's not, in the company's eyes, worthwhile for them to keep it open for one route," Lawr said.

While much of Haliburton County already utilizes roadside delivery, community mailboxes, and P.O. boxes, Lindsay still maintains urban letter carriers. These positions are now directly in the crosshairs as Canada Post pivots to community mailboxes.

The local union president questioned the financial logic behind the transition, pointing to the costs of manufacturing community mailboxes, scouting safe locations, and providing vehicles for previous walking routes, which might offset any projected savings.

"How much are you actually saving by doing this?" Lawr said. "It's like they're intentionally driving it into the ground. It's unbelievable."

The union president went on to voice her concerns for seniors and those with mobility issues, noting that while Canada Post offers the delivery accommodation program for those unable to reach a community mailbox, getting into the program is a bureaucratic nightmare.

"From the feedback [users] have given me... it is extremely difficult. It was a lot of back and forth, doctors' notes. It just felt like pulling teeth trying to get onto this program," Lawr said. "And that's if you even have a family doctor in this area.

"I don't think the corporation realizes how much of a lifeline we actually are," she added.

The postal service said once the initial consultations with bargaining agents were completed, they will begin "engaging municipal officials."

"We're committed to moving forward in a thoughtful way that prioritizes service for all Canadians while protecting access to vital postal services in rural, remote and Indigenous communities."

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Highlander news

Work continues on medical centre smell

By Lisa Gervais

An odour issue continues to plague the Haliburton Family Medical Centre building, although Dysart et al's maintenance facilities operator, Rob Parish, said last week it does not appear to be mould.

"We did a group of air quality and airborne mould samples. One spore per cubic metre was found in the lower back kitchen. Anything below 100 per cubic metre is considered a low hazard," he said.

Parish added the area does not share heating or ventilation with other parts of the building open to the public, such as the Optical Centre, Hill Chiropractor, doctors' offices, or LifeLabs. Parish said the health unit and Pinchin (the company contracted to complete the air quality) found no visible signs of mould throughout the building, including LifeLabs.

During the air quality testing, Parish said there were elevated levels of carbon dioxide and total volatile organic compounds were found. He said they contracted Pinchin to do a review of the heating and ventilation systems within the medical centre.

Kimberley Robinson, executive director and office manager for the centre, said the plan was to "engage the services of a qualified mechanical engineer to undertake a follow-up investigation of the HVAC equipment to determine how more fresh air can be brought into the building to lower the carbon dioxide and total volatile organic compounds concentrations. Pinchin's mechanical team can assist if required."

Lifelabs in Haliburton is closed this week. *Photo by Adam Frisk.*

She said the report also suggested doing further investigation into the health centre's family health team lunchroom and/or the attached washroom, particularly walls with sinks and toilets to determine if there is concealed mould growth.

She added, "the smell is indicative of an air circulation issue which is being investigated. We are expecting a plan/scope of work any day now to remedy this as well as further investigation of the mould found in the family health team kitchen."

Angelica Ingram, manager of tourism for the County, speaks to industry stakeholders about the Municipal Services Corporation at the Pinestone on April 2. *Photo by Adam Frisk.*

Rebuilding connection with tourism business owners

By Adam Frisk
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Haliburton tourism industry is ushering in a new era by welcoming the formation of an industry-led Municipal Services Corporation (MSC).

During a tourism stakeholders meeting that was hosted at the Pinestone Resort and Conference Centre on April 2, the County of Haliburton said it is restructuring how it handles tourism by moving toward a more collaborative, stakeholder-led model. The move comes after the County begins to see the revenue generated from the Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) on short-term rentals.

Angelica Ingram, manager of tourism for the County, explained that the shift wasn't just about tax dollars, but about rebuilding a connection with business owners that had been lost in recent years. She explained, following the seminar, that for nearly a decade, various tourism groups existed in the Highlands, but the most recent iteration disbanded in 2022.

"The two people who were leading it were just too busy, and they couldn't continue, and nobody really took on the reins," Ingram said.

Ingram said that since she stepped into her role at the end of 2023, businesses have been vocal about wanting to reconnect.

"I listened... I said I need a little bit of time to just get my feet wet," she said. "Then in 2025, I started to have conversations with people: 'let's try to get this thing going again.'"

And thus a tourism stakeholder session was held. The informal stakeholder group will be supported by the County, the Haliburton County Development Corporation (HCDC), and the Chamber of Commerce. While not a formal committee of council, Ingram explained that the information gathered at these meetings will directly impact her department's choices.

"This is a really great opportunity for me to hear what people are saying, how they're feeling... You can send out emails, you can do online surveys, but the engagement isn't always there," the County representative said. "This is the kind of engagement I love."

For many others in the room, the meeting was a welcome reunion.

"I used to religiously go to all the meetings previous to COVID," Tegan Legge, general manager of tourism and recreation at Haliburton Forest, said. "Meetings like this are really important so that we can gather and see what's going on and see who's still in the room. There are operators in this room that I didn't even know were still in the County."

So how does the MSC work? Under provincial law, 50 per cent of MAT revenue must go to an entity responsible for tourism marketing and development. Since the tax took effect on October 1, 2024, the County has begun tracking its impact.

"The first year we've seen about $85,000," Ingram said, adding that three townships are collecting, and one is still in the implementation phase. "I think $100,000 is a better picture going forward of what we could see."

And where will the money go? The County said that the spending power would lie with MSC's seven-member board, which would be made up of four council reps and three public members.

"The decision won't be mine or Scott's (Scott Ovell, director of economic development); it will be the MSC that gets to make that decision," Ingram explained.

A "wish list" of projects for the MSC has already taken shape with wayfinding, signage, and rail trail enhancements. There's also a plan to shift marketing behaviour from individual business competition toward an entire regional brand identity.

While the MSC focuses on marketing and signage, operators like Legge suggest that the County look at some of the barriers in the industry to keep Haliburton competitive.

"Tourism aside, but the County in general, if they can help with public transportation and cutting red tape for accommodators... that's really beneficial," Legge said. "Things like my canopy tour, I can't fill it if I don't have enough accommodations in the area for people to stay in."

The stakeholder said that a successful tourism industry requires support for the workforce.

"It's not just about staff housing. It's also about daycare. It's about being able to support those young families that are going to be working in our industry," Legge said. "Housekeeping, servers, front office. That is probably even more important sometimes."

The consensus in the room following the two-hour session was that Haliburton's tourism industry will be stronger with a collaborative, not a solo, mission.

"People always think they're in competition with one another. They're not," Ingram said. "Their best success comes from working together."

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Highlander news

Dr. Thomas Piggott will be in Minden April 14. *File.*

Health unit bringing town hall to Minden

By Mike Baker

An upcoming community town hall in Minden will give County residents the chance to help shape the future of Lakelands Public Health (LPH) programs and priorities, says local medical officer of health Dr. Thomas Piggott.

The health unit kicks off a four-part series at the Minden Community Centre April 14 at 4 p.m. There will be other sessions in Port Hope, Lindsay and Peterborough through the end of May.

Each town hall will offer an overview of LPH services followed by interactive discussions with staff and opportunities for attendees to provide one-on-one feedback to program and department heads. The input gathered will be used to form the health unit's new strategic plan, Piggott said.

"It's only once in a generation that you get the chance to create a new health unit, so we want to take the time to engage and bring the community along as much as possible," Piggott said. "We want to listen to what people think about public health – the good, the bad, the ugly and everything in between."

Piggott said the session will provide his staff an opportunity to explain all that public health is responsible for – and learn about existing service gaps the community want to see plugged.

The agency primarily deals with chronic disease prevention, infectious disease control, environmental and family health and emergency preparedness. Public health takes the lead on immunization, testing, treatment and counselling for sexual health and substance abuse and operating programs like Healthy Babies, Healthy Children (HBHC) and Healthy Smiles Ontario.

"I think public health is an ongoing two-way dialogue. It's not just something we do and dictate to our community; it has to include conversations and really be something we grow and build together," Piggott said.

Since the merger between Peterborough Public Health and Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge district health unit in January 2025, Piggott said LPH has made many program enhancements – including one that was made possible because of the union.

"We've introduced the nurse family partnership program (NFP), which is something that focuses on assisting vulnerable women 24 and younger who are first-time moms. It includes home visits and is something we couldn't do before the merger because both health units had too small a population to partake," Piggott said, noting it's a collaboration with McMaster University.

He said the health unit has also invested around $500,000 to bolster its infection prevention control hub.

"We've started harmonizing a lot of our disease reporting dashboards – both health units had slightly different ways of communicating infectious diseases and rates of injury and chronic disease, so that's all on our website now, where people can search by region," Piggott added.

While the union wasn't just about improving efficiency and removing redundancies, Piggott said LPH has managed to save around $300,000 in occupancy and insurance costs bringing PPH and HKPR together under one banner.

Piggott said the the health unit will unveil a new strategic plan in 2027.

"It's going to take the next year or so to really complete… through this journey, there may be some changes, but we're looking to do them more opportunistically. If we have people departing, we're looking to make sure there's work we want to continue to do but also looking to do things we've never done before and that's exciting," he said.

Piggott said he'll be in Minden next week and hopes to see a full house at the community centre.

"Taking steps to improve public health services is critically important, especially now given the state of the world and the challenges people are facing. We hope people come out and vocalize their thoughts. We're open to having honest conversations, even around challenges as that's the only way to reflect and improve," Piggott said.

Anyone who can't attend can participate by filling out a survey available online at www.lakelandsph.ca/news-and-alerts/posts/community-survey.

ADVERTORIAL

Your land isn't messy, it's getting going

By Simon Payn

A few years ago I planted an ecological garden slap bang in the middle of Haliburton, next to the post office, across from the town hall, by the intersection visitors hesitate at because they don't understand it… You get the picture. The garden at Lucas House got noticed.

Someone said to me the other day that the garden looked messy in that first year.

To be fair, it was sparse. The plants were small and there were big gaps between them. If you didn't know, you might think it was failing. It was certainly not a TV show "reveal".

But one person's messy is another person's establishing. So I pushed back on my critic: an ecological garden develops variety – grasses next to perennials, ground that is covered and stops weeds growing.

Instant gardens less so. You could say they're brittle. Those big, beautiful plants don't yet have roots that are integrated into the soil. They're not yet part of the landscape. They are pictures placed on the land rather than inhabitants of it.

The tidiness myth

> A neat lawn signifies that someone is on top of their domestic affairs. Their bathroom must be Lysoled to a shine.

We tend to think tidy means healthy. A tidy house is a clean house lived in by a healthy person. Piles of books gathering dust and toys scattered on the floor less so. We feel that a sense of neglect must filter through to all parts of our lives.

A neat lawn is the sign that someone is on top of their domestic affairs. If their lawn is that neat, their bathroom must be Lysoled to a shine and the shampoos lined up just right.

This feels like common sense – that neatness is next to godliness – but it's something we've learned. It's not a law of nature.

A neat, trimmed lawn is a monoculture that offers little to the rest of nature. Those weekly cuts mean the grass never forms deep roots so struggles to help combat erosion. You miss the welcome sight of a new flower first thing in the morning. It never sets seed. It's a carpet and not much more.

Those stems that are cut down each fall to put the garden to bed make overwintering insects homeless. That means there will be fewer insects to pollinate the plants next summer, and fewer chances to see butterflies and bees in your garden. When the stems are left, the landscape has height that survives the blanket of snow, providing a brown vertical spike against the white.

Cues to care

This doesn't mean we go to the other extreme. Raw nature can look chaotic… and chaotic isn't a good look in front yards. People complain your plants bring down the tone of the neighbourhood, even lower house prices.

That's why I use "cues to care", which show the landscape is deliberate. I have paths running through Lucas House, an edge of mulch by the sidewalk to keep plants off the path. There's a bench. Even a metal sculpture of a moose.

I might be careful about placing tall plants too near the front so they don't block views to the rest of the garden. Or I might add some Serviceberry or Pagoda Dogwood trees that take the eye to the White Pine by the lake.

The messiness of life

After the first year, the garden at Lucas House started to fill in. It was much less sparse the second year and dense the third. So dense that plants were packed in together, some sharing the same space of sky – one low, the other high.

It's still not the neatness of lawn and mulch. From a distance, it's hard to tell where one plant ends and the other begins.

But get closer to the garden in early August and notice the butterflies and bees, all living their lives amid the stems and leaves. To them, it's not messy, it's home.

Simon Payn owns Grounded, which designs, installs and cares for ecological landscapes. Visit groundedgardens.ca.

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Editorial opinion

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To report on issues, people and events important to the community.

To reflect and promote pride in the culture, people and landscape of The Highlands.

To encourage Highlanders to believe in themselves, in our community, and in their power to make our place in the world better every day.

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Moving the needle

By Lisa Gervais

The local government landscape is changing - here in Haliburton County - and across the province.

On April 2, the Ontario government introduced the Better Regional Governance Act, 2026. If passed, it would make a number of changes to the way regional governments function in some of Ontario's fastest-growing regions.

The provincial government claims these changes will support lower costs for municipal taxpayers and better align regional decision-making and shared provincial-regional priorities.

The proposed changes include giving the minister of municipal affairs and housing the power to appoint upper-tier council chairs in eight regions and giving them 'strong chair' powers - to help them deliver on government priorities, such as housing and infrastructure.

The Ontario government further claims the proposed legislation would reduce the cost of government and support efficient decision-making.

The areas include: Niagara Region, Simcoe County, Durham, Halton, Muskoka, Peel, Waterloo and York.

In the press release, it was noted the number of municipal elected officials in Simcoe (population 351,927) and Niagara (population 477,941) is significantly higher than many other comparable municipalities in the province. Niagara region has 126 elected officials across its upper and lower-tier councils. By comparison, Toronto City council has 26 for a population of over three million.

Simcoe County council is to be reduced to 17, from 32; and Niagara to 13 from 32.

I cannot help but compare these numbers to Haliburton County; where we have 24 elected officials on upper and lower-tier governments for a population of about 20,500 full-time residents. There are only two fewer on Toronto City council for three-million-plus residents.

There is no way these numbers will add up for the provincial government going forward.

The press release does contain the words "all regions must review their council composition following the 2026 municipal election."

In other words, nothing is going to happen before the October election. It is the 2026-2030 councils that will have to find a made-in Haliburton County solution, or the province will drop the hammer.

Haliburton County knows that. A report tabled at the April 8 County council meeting considered a staff report that recommended beginning a community-wide study to explore options for the future affordability and governance of Haliburton County.

The report – which was unanimously endorsed - recommended that council: authorize the County's CAO to engage an independent consultant – the Eastern Ontario Regional Network - to begin the study; and allow warden Dave Burton to formally request support for the study from the minister of municipal affairs and housing.

Gary Dyke said the purpose of the proposed study is to get good information on how the County of Haliburton and its local municipalities can operate more effectively, efficiently and deliver better value for taxpayers.

The current County council has had years to implement the recommendations of the service delivery review but has not quite gotten there yet, and the ministry knows that.

If those seeking re-election do not feel it is time to move the needle, and want to stick to old ways, we suggest they do not run again. It is time for visionary councillors who will put the needs of residents ahead of their own.

HUMANS OF HALIBURTON HIGHLANDS

Beauty of Highlands art

By Susan Tromanhauser

Inspired by his grandfather's camp stories from 1942, Zach Warne always wanted to attend Kilcoo Camp.

When he arrived for his first camp experience at the age of 12, he knew he was in heaven. After years as a camper, he rose through the ranks of staff up to the director of leaders in training. Warne admits staying until age 24 was "far longer than I should have" but felt the need to be "up north," loving the opportunity to be in nature with lifelong friends.

The arrival of COVID ended Warne's camp days but was also an opportunity for his parents to purchase a cottage on Gull Lake. With a place to stay, Warne continued spending summers in the area, landing a summer gig at Rails End Gallery, using skills from his fine arts degree from OCAD (Ontario College of Art and Design).

Working at Rails End introduced him to the arts community in Haliburton. Joining the Haliburton Arts Council "legitimized (him) as an artist" and offered him support for the business side of the art world, not part of his OCAD curriculum. Warne began showing and selling his abstract and landscape work and building his resume. But, unfortunately, like so many jobs in the Haliburton area, the Rails End position was only for the summer.

In February 2024, while sipping coffee over a copy of *The Highlander*, he saw an ad for his dream job. By April, he moved full-time to Gull Lake, landing the position of curator of the Haliburton Highlands Museum, working alongside museum director Kate Butler, creating displays showcasing local history. His favourite part is working at the farmstead in Glebe Park during the summer months, inspired by nature.

Through learning about the history, Warne understands why the Haliburton Highlands "is a good place with good people - people who look out for each other." Warne theorizes "people had to stick together in the beginning; they were dying if they didn't." It is the culture of neighbours collaborating which has resulted in the long family lineages he sees in the Highlands. He admits after his first couple of winters "he wouldn't have made it" alone in Haliburton.

Sharing the stories of the Highlands at the museum fills Warne's day but also leaves enough time for him to work on his personal artistic projects. He thanks his Grade 12 teacher for introducing him to oils, explaining it was like "falling in love." He was also encouraged to follow his dream of an artistic lifestyle when an OCAD instructor insisted his work was worthy of display in a gallery.

During the summer, Warne sets up his easel on the dock overlooking Gull Lake, painting the light reflecting off the water. He often gets a sunburned back and shoulders demonstrating how engrossed he gets in his work.

Zach Warne. *Submitted.*

Warne's position as curator of the museum allows him to meld his first love - the beauty of the Highlands with his love of the arts – for Warne it is a perfect marriage.

Editorial opinion

LETTERS

Dissatisfied with Laurie Scott

Dear editor,

I am sharing excerpts of a letter I wrote to Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock MPP Laurie Scott to express a few thoughts on how I think her government is performing. I would like to note that many of the actions that this government has taken were never stated, or even hinted at, during the campaign. Dishonesty and contempt for the will of the people is a feature of this government, starting with Doug Ford.

Health care is being deliberately underfunded to break it, and my husband and I may become victims. We were patients of Dr. Van der Leyden. Now that she is leaving, we will have no primary care provider as we had to give up our previous health-care providers to sign on with her.

Education is going through the same process. Underfund, break, privatize. My granddaughter is in Grade 11, has autism and ADHD and no support. Our government cares little for our kids. The takeover of school boards is a blatant power grab. Who can parents appeal to now when there are problems? I will add the OSAP cuts. My granddaughter and her siblings are from a low-income family, so post-secondary education has now been ruled out as a possibility for her. It sentences my grandchildren to lifelong poverty.

Corruption and cronyism are rampant. Ford is careful to take care of his rich buddies (donors) but seems to be very contemptuous of the ordinary people. The rich are getting richer and the poor getting evicted in Ford's Ontario.

The shady legislation around the Freedom of Information Act and the undemocratic power grabs over the municipalities, and conservation authorities.

Will you put a stop to this Scott? Probably not, because you always vote with your party, no matter what crazy scheme Ford comes up with. I am very unsatisfied with the job Scott is doing.

Kathi Douglas
Minden Hills

School survey responsible and overdue

Dear editor,

Regarding Phil Primavera's comments regarding the Trillium Lakelands District School Board student Census in *The Highlander* the last couple of weeks: you had the option to opt out of the survey—plain and simple.

As someone who moved to this County 16 years ago from a very multicultural city, I find the criticism of this survey misplaced.

The school board is taking a necessary step to better understand its students and to foster a more inclusive environment—something that reflects the reality that not every child in Haliburton shares the same background or identity.

As a parent who participated in the survey, I fully support this direction and see it as both responsible and overdue.

Jennifer Adam
Haliburton

PHOTOS OF THE WEEK

Heather Cruickshank's photo of Barnum Creek, taken at the bridge on the Barnum trail. They liked the heart shaped ice around the rock.

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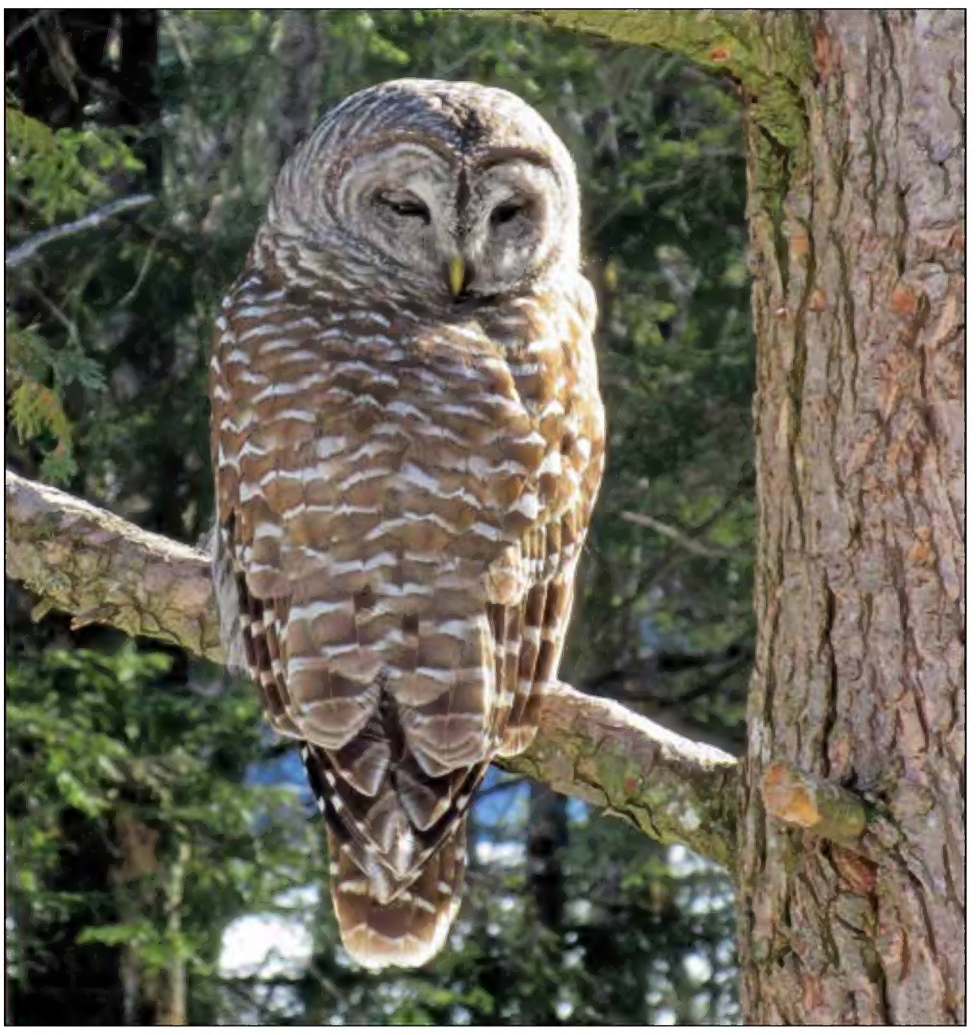
**Limit of 3 photos.*



Shirley Davison Mark sent this owl photo.

Highlander news

POLICE BOARD NEWS

Police statistics

Haliburton Highlands OPP detachment commander, Staff Sgt. Deb McClure, said the top five violations for January-February 2026 were assault, firearms-related offences, fraud, theft under $5,000, fail to comply, and (things such as) threats and harassment.

Breaking down the statistics at the March 25 Haliburton Highlands OPP police detachment board meeting, she said motor vehicle collisions were up in January-February. None were fatal. There were 81 incidents, up 9.5 per cent from the same period in 2025, when there were 74.

"I would hazard a guess that is due to the winter we've been having," she said.

Criminal code and provincial statute charges laid were down nearly 60 per cent, with 255. McClure said, "again, the weather and road conditions have affected some of our proactive enforcement, so I'm not surprised with the amount of snow and winter we've had." Speeding, seatbelt, and distracted driving charges were all down the first two months of the year. Impaired was the same.

Violent crime was down nearly 66 per cent. Sexual offences went from eight to one. Assaults and firearms-related offences dropped to eight, from 24. And, other offences involving violence or the threat of violence dropped to four, from six.

Break and enters were down 50 per cent, to two, from four. McClure noted fraud is down from 16 incidents in January-February 2025 to nine in the same period this year.

Andrew Fletcher chairs a police detachment board meeting. *Photo by Lisa Gervais.*

"The frauds make me happy. I know that Constable Joel Imbeau has been out doing a few presentations in our community. That's good to see those numbers are consistent with that."

Drug crimes were down, as were trafficking incidents.

McClure further noted they now have a new officer under the offender management and apprehension program (OMAP), with 90-100 dedicated hours. They have done 15 compliance checks on 16 people; and executed 14 warrants. They are hiring a replacement domestic abuse investigator. Two members attended a snowmobile course, with four times the patrol hours for enforcement and education.

Board elections

Andrew Fletcher was acclaimed as the returning chair of the board, while Andrew Hodgson is back as vice-chair.

Fletcher is a former police chief for South Simcoe, while Hodgson, a provincial appointee to the board, is a realtor who was named Highlander of the Year in 2025.

They are joined by community representative, Andy Chvedukas, Algonquin Highlands mayor Liz Danielsen, Dysart et al deputy mayor Walt McKechnie, Highlands East mayor Dave Burton, and Minden Hills mayor Bob Carter.

The board was created as part of the Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019, which came into effect April 1, 2024.

OPP costs

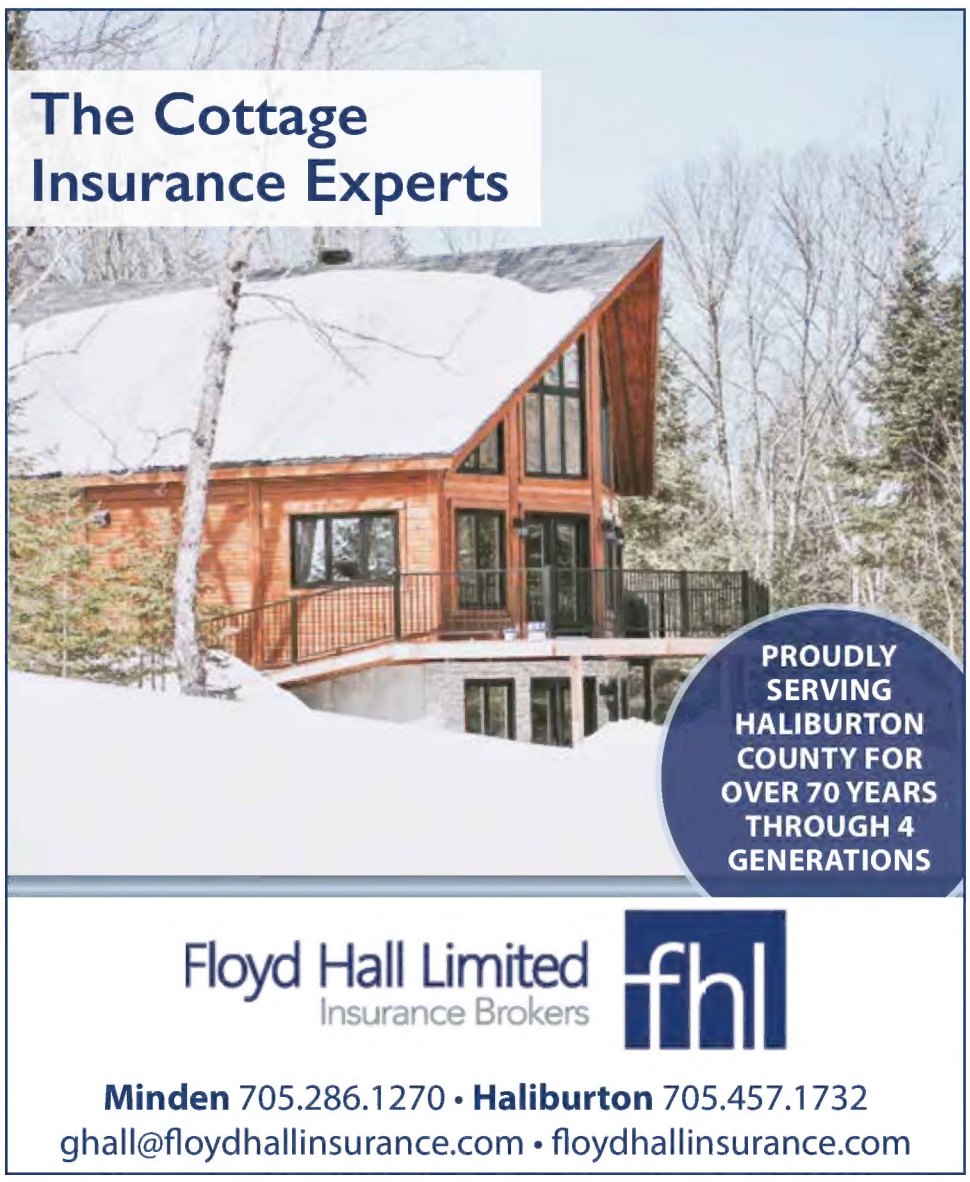
Fletcher said he had reached out to the Ministry of the Solicitor General and County of Haliburton CAO Gary Dyke about policing costs and budget restraints.

The townships were hit with an 11 per cent increase for 2026, with concerns over future billing.

Fletcher said he and Dyke spoke about avenues they can pursue as a board, through the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Rural Ontario Municipal Association. He said they need to continue to bring a unified message to the province, particularly about the cost to smaller municipalities when the government-imposed freeze on the hike is lifted in a couple of years and the price goes up even more.

"It's not sustainable at this point, if we continue to rise each year," Fletcher said. He added staffing costs are set but it's hoped the province can take on other expenditures.

(OPP detachment board news compiled by Lisa Gervais)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Highlander news

MINDEN HILLS NEWS

New pedestrian crosswalk

Minden Hills councillors, Legion members, and the general public got their first look at a conceptual plan for a proposed pedestrian crosswalk on Bobcaygeon Road in the village March 26.

During 2026 budget deliberations, council approved the construction of the new crosswalk after Richard Schell, first vice president of the Legion, made a delegation last fall asking for a memorial crossing with cross hatch red and white paint and an image of a soldier on either end. The Legion said it would cover the cost, hoping the township could use a contractor to install it.

Director of public works, Mike Timmins, said the township has been working with Engage Engineering on project design. He called it a high level, conceptual plan, including general location, parking implications, signage and lighting.

Timmins said they want to get the crosswalk away from problematic intersections at Water Street and Newcastle streets. The rendering has it closer to the middle of the block.

Timmins said the final location will be determined by survey, which is underway. He added the placement decision will take into account other street furniture, light posts, and catch basin to ensure a logical and efficient installation.

In order to meet required setbacks, Bobcaygeon Road would lose four parking spaces. However, four accessible parking spaces would be added.

The existing crosswalk would be eliminated and signage removed once the new one is operational.

Councillors expressed concerns about parking implications and felt the township had to talk to downtown businesses before doing anything more.

Friends and Family Festival

Director of community services, Candace McGuigan, said the township has been approached by organizers of a Friends and Family Festival to rent the fairgrounds for a three-day music festival Sept. 18-20.

She said the organizer has more than 10 years' of experience putting together festival events. "This is a family focussed event and the organizer intends to emphasize local for event logistics and support. Local food vendors and service clubs will be approached, and (there will be) volunteer opportunities," McGuigan said.

She added the planners will be doing a meet-and greet May 22, 3:30 – 5:30 p.m. at S.G. Nesbitt Memorial Arena, for people to learn about the festival and ways to get involved.

McGuigan added, "FAF Festival Ontario is a celebration of community, culture, and fun. It is a weekend filled with live music from local and regional artists, local food, and marketplace with unique goods and crafts. The capacity for the event is 2,000 attendees. Staff and key partners have been meeting with the organizers over the last eight months to review logistics and requirements for this event. The organizers' plans are well developed and discussions and plan review will continue up to and during the event."

Minden Hills fire chief Don Kruger. *Photo by Lisa Gervais.*

Swift water rescue

Minden Hills fire chief Don Kruger said some of his volunteers will begin swift water rescue training in the spring.

Now, the department calls for assistance from the province. Minden Hills personnel are not permitted to enter the water.

He added that through the Ontario Fire Marshal (OFM) and the Ontario Fire College (OFC), they have been able to arrange for the training courses to be held in Minden Hills.

"Through this arrangement, we have been allocated at least half of the spaces in each course they run in Minden Hills or roughly eight spots per course. This is a terrific opportunity to partner with the OFM, train our firefighters, and showcase the Minden Hills community and water features," Kruger said.

He further said training costs will be minimal because of the arrangement. The OFC allows the host department to charge a fee to other departments attending the course, which offsets costs to Minden Hills.

The equipment used for swift water rescue is the same equipment used for ice rescue and surface water rescue, both of which the Minden Hills fire department has performed for years. Ropes and other equipment have already been purchased and are updated on an annual basis. The department has begun the process of purchasing the suits that can be used for swift water, ice rescue, and surface water rescue.

(Minden Hills news compiled by Lisa Gervais)

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Scott Russell spoke at the Speaker Series April 8 and will be a guest at the Minden Community Food Centre fundraiser April 11. *Submitted.*

Olympics 'great hope of the world'

By Lisa Gervais

Former CBC broadcaster, Scott Russell, was at the 'Bird's Nest' at the 2008 Beijing Olympics when "a 6'5 guy from Jamaica got out of the blocks, unfolded himself, and Usain Bolt ran 100m in 9.69 seconds before 95,000 people.

"We didn't know that he could go that fast – that a human being could go that fast – and then he assumed the lightning bolt pose – the place just erupted. What a place to be at to see that happen," Russell recalled during an April 7 interview with *The Highlander.*

A former Kilcoo camper and staffer, who's had a cottage on Gull Lake the past 15 years, Russell spoke at the Speaker Series April 8, and will be joining Canadian figure skating icon, Tracy Wilson, for a fireside chat at the Minden Community Food Centre fundraiser April 11.

Following the Milano-Cortino Olympics, in which Norway bested the world with 41 medals, compared to Canada's 21, Russell commented on criticism of a lack of funding for Canadian sport.

"I happen to buy it," he said. "Core funding for high performance sport has not gone up in this country for 20 years; core funding to the national sport organizations which drive sport in the country. When you're stagnant for 20 years, and you're trying to rely on 'own the podium' to produce all this high tech and the inside edge, that gets pretty difficult."

He was asked about the Norway sports model versus what is happening in our nation.

"In many major provinces in this country, health and physical education and sport is not part of core curriculum. So, kids are getting a miniscule amount of sport through our educational system, and they're getting 40 minutes a week, and that's not enough.

"That's the difference with Norway. Kids are in sport throughout their school education. They don't specialize in sport right away. We tend to, in the club system, specialize. If you are going to be a hockey player, you are going to pay to play and you are going to specialize in hockey. Whereas in Norway, you are going to do every sport and when it gets time for high performance, we're going to identify those people who excel in certain sports at a mature age."

He's asked if the Olympics are still relevant in our modern world.

"I love the Olympics and I believe they should be as relevant today as they have been in the past. But they are struggling with so many issues right now. One of them is the Olympics are becoming politicized, and struggling to maintain the ideal. They are also struggling with gender identification."

However, Russell said, "the Olympics are the great hope of the world – and the idea is that people from every race, faith, gender, orientation, and ability are welcome in the one place in the one time – to engage in competition which is fair and just and to show us what is humanly possible.

"There are people who are trying to corrupt the Olympics. And the Olympics are not perfect, but for two weeks or 16 days, it's amazing to me that this dysfunctional family that we call humanity can somehow get together and make good things happen. I think we have to hold on to that."

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Corporation of the Township of Minden Hills has received applications to consider by-laws to stop up, close, and convey those parcels of land, being shoreline road allowances, more particularly described as follows:

1. **File No. PLSRA2025020:** Part of the original shore road allowance along the shore of Gull River, lying in front of Property Roll #4616-051-000-34900 located within Lot 27, Concession 3, Geographic Township of Lutterworth

2. **File No. PLSRA2025048:** Part of the original shore road allowance along the shore of Soyers Lake, lying in front of 1058 Renown Drive located within Lot 28, Concession 7, Geographic Township of Minden

3. **File No. PLSRA2025082:** Part of the original shore road allowance along the shore of Horseshoe Lake, lying in front of 1048 McInerney Lane located within Lot 15, Concession 7, Geographic Township of Minden

4. **File No. PLSRA2025086:** Part of the original shore road allowance along the shore of Gull River, lying in front of 1058 Bingo Lane located within Lot 30, Concession 1, Geographic Township of Lutterworth

The above noted applications are available for inspection in the Planning Department located at 7 Milne Street, Minden, Ontario by appointment only. Additional information may be obtained by contacting the undersigned or by visiting www.mindenhills.ca/newsroom.

AND TAKE NOTICE should you wish to provide comments with respect to the above referenced applications, please submit in writing those comments to the undersigned not later than end of day on **May 1, 2026**.

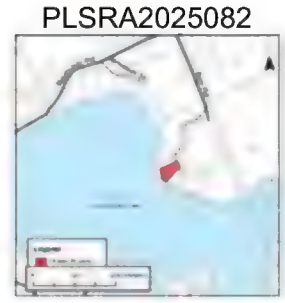
AND FURTHER TAKE NOTICE any person who claims that their land will be prejudicially affected is asked to contact the undersigned not later than May 1, 2026.

AND TAKE FURTHER NOTICE if deemed advisable, By-laws giving effect to the proposed closures and conveyances will be passed by the Council for the Corporation of the Township of Minden Hills. Please note that a Council meeting to consider By-laws for the above referenced applications will be scheduled at a later date following the requiste commenting period.

Donna Sisson
Clerical Assistant, Building, By-Law and Planning
705-286-1260 Ext. 509
dsisson@mindenhills.ca

PLSRA2025048

PLSRA2025082



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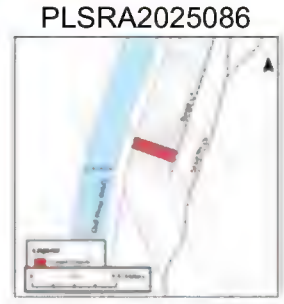

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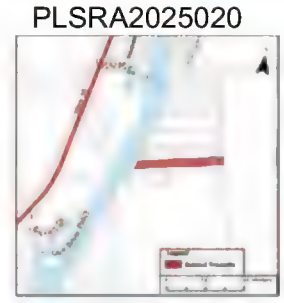

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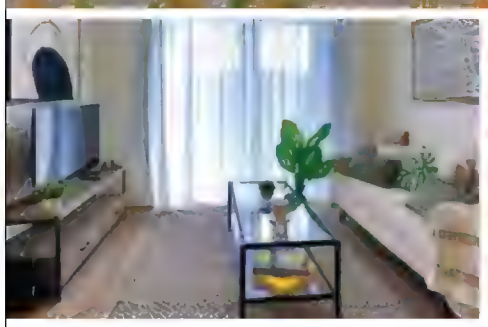

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B.C. native Jon Dunsmore emerges from the icy water of Head Lake after taking a plunge last week. *Photo by Adam Frisk.*

Keeping the frigid plunge streak alive

By Adam Frisk
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

On a crisp spring morning, dog walkers are usually seen at Head Lake Park bundled up while taking Fido for a stroll past the frozen beach. But for Jon Dunsmore, the sub-zero temperature and partially frozen lake were just what he needed.

Dressed in his swimsuit, a toque, and a towel hanging off his shoulder, Dunsmore walked the path past the dog park, dropped his beach towel on the rocks, and walked straight into Head Lake.

Dunsmore, who was visiting his mother, a lifelong local, explained to *The Highlander* that he wasn't going to let a change in geography break a disciplined habit: a daily polar dip.

"I try to do it every day," he said. "And I just wanted to keep the streak going."

A resident of British Columbia's Haida Gwaii, Dunsmore plunges into the Pacific waters every single day in a ritual that isn't about the thrill, but more about the mental edge.

"It's not something I enjoy doing," he admitted after emerging from the icy water of Head Lake. "But to force myself into the water every day is a great element to bring into my life. If I do this every day, everything else seems a little easier."

Dunsmore said the practice helps boost both his physical and mental health, and that self-discipline was the primary driver. Despite the honking geese that joined the B.C. native in the frigid waters, Dunsmore said his internal dialogue goes silent while he focuses on just one thing. Breathing.

"When I first go into the water, you kind of have that sensation of a loss of breath," he explained. "I really try to control that, focus on my breathing, and just do some real deep breaths while I'm in there... just silence the mind."

According to several Canadian studies, frequent plunges into icy water can provide several health benefits, including increased metabolism and reduced inflammation. However, according to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, exposure to sudden cold can spike heart rate and blood pressure, which can be dangerous for those who may have heart conditions. People should consult their family doctor before trying the practice, and never take a plunge alone.

As for Dunsmore, back in Haida Gwaii, the ocean temperatures typically hover between 5 C and 10 C, but he found the freshwater of Haliburton to have a bit of a "bite" to it.

"It's colder than back home, definitely," he said. "I've never taken the temperature of the water [in Haida Gwaii], but it doesn't have that same bite as it does here."

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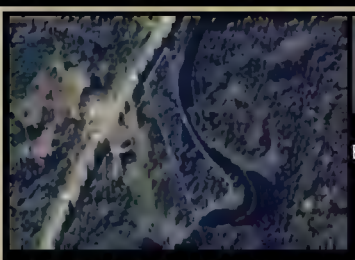

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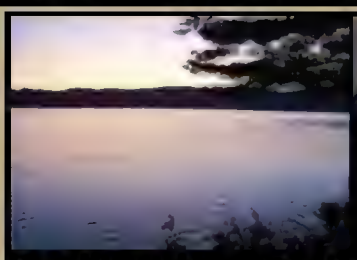

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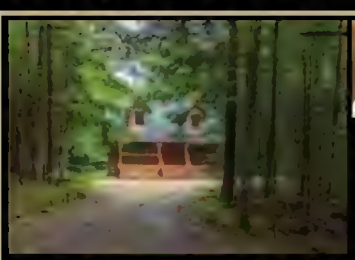

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Highlander community

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A taste of spring

Highlands East, and other County residents gathered April 4 for the annual Maple Syrup Festival. Held at the Lloyd Watson Centre in Wilberforce, it featured all you can eat pancakes and sausages with locally-made maple syrup. There was also a bazaar and craft tables. And, there was a 50/50 draw for the Wilberforce Agricultural Fair. The Wilforce FUNraising Group stages the festival every Easter Saturday. This marked the 45th anniversary of the event that is a harbinger of spring. *(Lisa Gervais)*

Top: Dorothy Lee, Janet Deacon and Christiaan Deacon enjoy a family breakfast. Middle: Paula Bamford and vendor Judith Bamford with her homemade breads. Bottom: Vendor, artist, Luann Coghlan with some of her creations. *Photos submitted.*

Highlander community

Eggcellent Easter

Easter at the Gardens 2026 at Abbey Gardens in Haliburton took place April 4, featuring an egg-citing, family-friendly event. Activities included a forest egg hunt on the Chickadee Trail, cookie decorating, spring crafts, photos with the Easter Bunny, and meeting the ponies. *(Lisa Gervais)*

Above: Kara, Devin and Sonny, aged 1.5 years. Top right: Elisha Barlow, Clio Butz, Hanneli Butz and Cedric Butz found a special egg in the egg hunt. Bottom right: The Easter Bunny as himself; Abbey Gardens staffer Dwayne Hartshorn. *Submitted.*

NOTICE

ADOPTION OF 2026 BUDGET

NOTICE is provided that the Council of the Township of Algonquin Highlands proposes to enact a By-law to adopt the 2024 Municipal Budget at its Regular Meeting scheduled for **Thursday, April 16, 2026.**

The meeting will be held in the Council Chambers located at 1123 North Shore Road, Algonquin Highlands commencing at 9:00 AM. Members of the Public may also observe Council proceedings by joining a live-stream link. The live-stream link can be found on the meeting Agenda at https://algonquinhighlands.civicweb.net/portal/

Dated this 8th day of April 2026.

Dawn Newhook, Clerk/Deputy CAO
Township of Algonquin Highlands
1123 North Shore Road
Algonquin Highlands, ON K0M 1S0
T: (705) 489-2379 Ext. 333
E: dnewhook@algonquinhighlands.ca

thank you

We would to thank all of the businesses and individuals for your donations to
The Annual Wild Game dinner
and Auction on March 21.

It was a huge success and we could not have done it without all of your generous donations.

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SATURDAY APRIL 11TH

Doc(k) Day 2026

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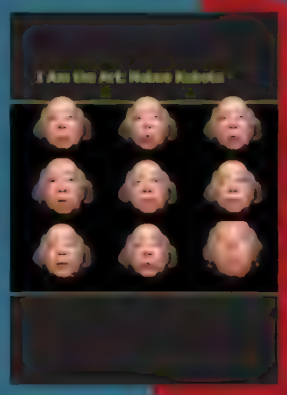
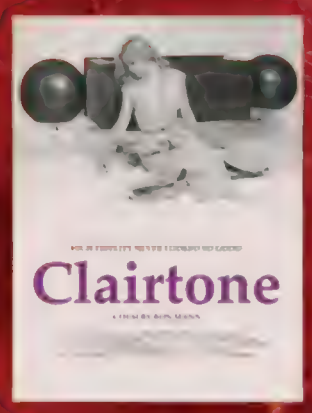


10:00 AM
I AM THE ART: NOBUO KUBOTA 85 mins

I Am the Art is a bold, intimate portrait of a Japanese-Canadian trailblazer whose creativity never stopped evolving. From early sculpture to sound poetry, avant-garde jazz, and live performance, Nobuo Kubota spent a lifetime making art. This is also a love story of caring for his 96-year-old wife, who lived with advanced Alzheimer's.



1:30 PM
CLAIRTONE 73 mins

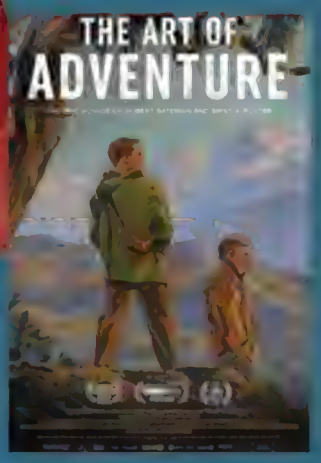
The captivating rise and fall of Clairtone Sound Corporation, an audacious Canadian electronics company founded by Peter Munk and David Gilmour during the vibrant 1960s. An immigration story of dauntless entrepreneurship and optimism.

3:30 PM
WE LEND A HAND
49 mins **THE FORGOTTEN STORY OF ONTARIO FARMERETTES**

The true story of the Ontario Farmerettes, 40,000 teenage girls who volunteered to work on Ontario farms between 1941 and 1952 to help produce food for the frontlines in Europe.

7:30 PM
THE ART OF ADVENTURE
90 mins +

As young men in their twenties, renowned wildlife artist Robert Bateman and spirited biologist Bristol Foster embark on a globe-trotting adventure in the 1950's in a Land Rover they name the Grizzly Torque. This is a powerful story of environmental activism, youthful naivety, human connections and respect for all living things.



Q&A WITH ALISON REID, DIRECTOR ROBERT BATEMAN AND BRISTOL FOSTER

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Highlander sports

Exciting future

The future of the Red Hawks varsity boys' hockey program looks bright following a successful three-week junior camp in March. Coach Jason Morissette said 24 players from Grades 9 and 10 participated, which included practices, an exhibition against Fenelon Falls Secondary School March 12 (a 7-6 loss) and inclusion in a multi-school tournament in Peterborough March 25. They went 2-1 there, beating St. Theresa from Belleville and St. Stephen from Bowmaville before falling to Peterborough's Holy Cross in the final. Only five of the players appeared on this year's varsity team, giving Morissette hope for a bigger and better program in 2026-27. "It's been pretty obvious there's a demand for hockey at Hal High… this was a great way for us to introduce some new players to the program and let them see what it's like to wear a Red Hawks jersey," Morissette said. "The players were a pleasure to deal with, and I'm really excited about this team's future." *(Mike Baker)*

Top: The Red Hawks junior camp featured 24 players, including 19 first timers. Bottom: Brycen Harrison observes the play. *Photos by Eleanor Dobbins.*

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2026 HANDBOOK
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Highlander sports

Canadian Navigable Waters Act

D M. Wills Associates Limited (Wills) on behalf of the Ministry of Transportation (MTO), Eastern Region hereby gives notice that two submissions have been added to the Navigable Waters Registry pursuant to the Canadian Navigable Waters Act for public comment described herein and its site and plans. Pursuant to paragraph 10(1)(b) of the said Act, The Ministry of Transportation has deposited with the Minister of Transport, on the on-line Common Project Search Registry (http://cps.canada.ca/) and under registry numbers 14438 and 14439, a description of the following work, its site and plans: the replacement of two structural culverts, one at Cope Creek in Faraday Township, and one at an Unnamed Watercourse in the Municipality of Highlands East, both on Highway 118

Comments regarding the effect of this work on marine navigation can be sent through the Common Project Search site mentioned above under the Comment section (search by the above referenced number) or if you do not have access to the internet, by sending your comments directly to

Sarah Roberts, P. Eng., Wills Project Engineer, at 705-742-2297 ext. 318 or sroberts@dmwills.com **OR** Rick Bean, MTO Project Manager, at 613-202-0098 or Rick.Bean@ontario.ca

Note that comments will be considered only if they are received not later than 30 days after the publication of this notice

Posted at Haliburton Highlands on this 9th day of April 2026

Transport Canada (TC) will not make your comments on a project available to the public on the online public registry. However, any information related to a work is considered as unclassified public record and could be accessible upon legal request. As such, the information and records provided should not contain confidential or sensitive information. If you want to provide confidential or sensitive information that you think should not be made public, please contact TC before submitting it.

The U15 Highland Storm Rep team with their trophy. *Submitted.*

Storm take OMHA championship title

The U15 Highland Storm Rep team, sponsored by Cheryl Smith RE/MAX, was crowned Victoria Durham League Champions; which earned their spot at the OMHA U15 Tier 3 Championships Halton Hills this past weekend.

Facing off against five other top teams in their division, the Storm came ready

Their tournament began Friday with an 8:15 a.m. matchup against the Mooretown Jr. Flags. The Storm set the tone with a commanding 4–1 victory. Lucas Upton led with two goals, while Lucas Vale and Austin Cunningham each added one. Assists came from Hudson Meyer and Vale, while goaltender Blake Hutchinson stood strong between the pipes.

Later that evening, the Storm faced the Prince Edward County Kings, securing a decisive 3–0 win. Hunter Hamilton delivered a hat trick, supported by assists from Tyler Hughes and Brady Burke.

With two round-robin wins, the Storm earned a direct bye to the semi-finals, where they once again met the Mooretown Jr. Flags Saturday evening. The team continued their dominant run with another shutout victory, winning 3–0. Cunningham scored twice, Hamilton added another goal and assist.

Championship Sunday saw the undefeated Storm face the Prince Edward County Kings once again. With a strong showing of support from family, friends, and fans who travelled to Halton Hills and filled the stands, the atmosphere was electric.

In a tightly contested battle, Cruize Neave scored the lone goal of the game, assisted by Cunningham, sealing a thrilling 1–0 victory and the OMHA Championship title.

Goaltender Corbin Elliot was exceptional throughout the final three games, recording three consecutive shutouts and proving to be a difference-maker when it mattered most.

The Storm's defensive unit: Meyer, Burke, Hughes, James Gooley, Duncan Evans-Fockler, and Liam Milburn played a critical role in the team's success. Their ability to shut down opponents, and maintain composure under pressure created a solid foundation for the team's championship run.

Offensively, the forward group of Neave, Hamilton, Cunningham, Vale, Upton, Chase Kerr, Hunter Peelow, Bently Bull, and Kelson Bagshaw worked cohesively, generating opportunities and capitalizing when it counted most.

The championship performance capped off an incredible season for the Storm, finishing with an impressive 24-6-6 record, a 20-game winning streak, and an outstanding 25 games unbeaten (22 wins, 3 ties).

Behind the bench, the team was led by head coach Jesse Johnson, assistant coach Chris Kerr, trainer Tommy Bagshaw, assistant trainer Tyler Martin, and manager Cheryl Smith.

The team extends heartfelt thanks to their dedicated coaching staff, supportive families, and the many fans who stood behind them all season long. *(Submitted)*

READ THE HIGHLANDER.
ANYWHERE.

Home of the Highland Storm

U11 Minden Carquest LL

The Highland Storm U11 Minden Carquest Local League season was one for the books.

Through unbelievable smiles, effort and determination, these kids went all the way to the A Championship.

The Storm had a great season going 19-3-2 with the highest goals for in the league.

Our defence was the backbone of the team with strong play from Tripp Meier, Keaton DeCarlo, Griffin Hunt and Francis Gilmour.

Our forwards: Wesley Bramham, Sebastian Dart, Chase Casella, Arizona Latanville, Dean DeLanca, Nolan Gallagher, Nixon Hopkins, Jaxon Pelley and Liam Grant were relentless, playing with drive, determination and effort every game.

Jack Hunter and Isaiah Young split duties between the pipes. They both played great all season and helped on the blue line switching between games.

With the incredible support from amazing parents and friends, this season will be hard to top.

The coaches, Adam DeCarlo, Jordan Hunt and Steve Pelley, could not be prouder of the team they grew to be this season.

From all the coaches, we would like to thank the parents

for allowing us to share this amazing season with all their wonderful kids.

As for the parents, we had a great time getting to know each and every one of you through all the shenanigans.

Lastly, to the kids of our Highland Storm team, we thank you for giving us a great season of laughs and fun and we are truly sad to see it end. *(Submitted)*

U9 MD Hockey Haven

The U9 MD hockey team enjoyed a memorable and successful season marked by growth, teamwork, and a strong sense of camaraderie.

From the first puck drop to the final game, the players demonstrated tremendous dedication and enthusiasm, improving their skills and supporting one another every step of the way. Practices were filled with energy and determination, and it was clear that each player took pride in contributing to the team's development. From the pre-game chants to the smiles on and off the ice, these moments will all be missed.

Offensively, the team saw standout performances from top scorers Maddox Gaffeney and Nathan Demerchant, who consistently found the back of the net and led by example. They were supported by a talented group of forwards including Gryphon Luck, James Pettes, Jack Parker, Jack Reid, Ella Sperrino, and James Seed, all of whom brought speed, skill, and relentless effort to every game.

On the defensive side, Hudson Lynch, Annabelle Hutson, Johnny Adlam, and Easton Sperrino played a crucial role in protecting their zone, showing resilience and strong positional awareness. Behind them, goaltender Quinntin Clark made significant strides throughout the season. Having not played net at all before, Quinntin developed into a confident and reliable goaltender, making key saves when the team needed them most. His growth in the crease has been remarkable, and he has a very bright future.

Beyond the rink, the team created lasting memories during tournament travels. Time spent together at the

pools, water park, arcade, and bowling alley brought the players closer and helped build strong friendships that will last well beyond the season. A season that would not have been possible without the dedication and commitment of the coaching and support staff. A special thank you goes to head coach Jamie Luck, assistant coach Jeff Burk, trainer Adam Hutson, and manager Ally French for their countless hours, guidance, and support. Their leadership helped create a positive and encouraging environment where players could thrive.

Overall, it was a fantastic season full of growth, friendships, and unforgettable moments both on and off the ice. Keep winning the small battles and the opportunities will come. Best of luck in your upcoming tryouts. *(Submitted)*

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What's on

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION EVENTS

Royal Canadian Legion - Branch 129 Haliburton

Mondays: Office open 9 a.m. to noon, clubroom closed. Bridge at 1 p.m., youth dart league (ages 10-18) 6:20 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Tuesdays: Cadets after school starts at 5 p.m., meeting starts at 6 p.m. Games and cards night starting at 6:30 p.m. All are welcome. Darts league 7 p.m. start.
Wednesdays: Bid euchre 1 p.m. start, Remembrance Hall. Bingo will resume in the spring.
Thursdays: General meeting third Thursday of the month, March to December; ladies auxiliary meeting last Thursday of the month, February to November.
Fridays: Meat draw, five draws, five prize each draw, first draw at 4:30 p.m., last draw at 6:30 p.m., tickets are $2 per draw; fun darts at 4:30 p.m. onwards; 50/50 draw at 5 p.m., tickets are $1 and available in the clubroom.
Saturdays: Open only for special events Clubroom hours: Monday 3-6 p.m., Tues 5-9 p.m., Wed/Thurs 3-6 p.m., Fri 3-7 p.m., Saturday/Sunday closed.

Royal Canadian Legion - Mabel D. Brannigan Branch 636 Minden

Lunch 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. **Monday to Thursday** with regular menu and daily special including Liver Lovers' **Tuesday**.
Friday Fish & Chips & Wings. Lunch 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and dinner 4-7 p.m.
Saturday all day breakfast 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with meat draws at 11 a.m.
Call ahead any day for take-out: 705-286-4541
Weekly activities:
Karaoke: call for dates
Monday: Rug Hookers every second week.
Monday: Euchre 1-3 p.m.
Thursday: Cribbage 1-3 p.m., Darts 7-9 p.m. and euchre 7-9 p.m.

Royal Canadian Legion - Branch 624 Wilberforce

Monday: open 7 to 10 p.m. Darts April 15, 22 and 29 at 7 p.m.
Tuesday: closed, special events only. Exercise club April 14, 21 and 28 at 1 p.m.
Wednesday: open 2 to 10 p.m. Darts April 15, 22 and 29 at 2 p.m.; cribbage at 6:30 p.m.; April 15, 22 and 29 quick supper from 5 to 6:30 p.m.
Thursday: open 2 to 10 p.m. HHHS social rec April 9 and 23 at 10 a.m.
Friday: open 2 to 11 p.m. Fish and chips April 17 from 5 to 8 p.m., with karaoke from 6:30 to 10:30 p.m. April 10 and 24 is community care lunch at noon and wings and jam session from 5 to 8 p.m.
Saturday: open 2 to 9 p.m. Karaoke April 18 from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. and trivia April 25 at 7 p.m.
Sunday: closed, special events only. Ladies auxiliary breakfast April 12 from 9 to 11 a.m.

Royal Canadian Legion – Branch 566 Cardiff

Hours: Sunday and Monday 3 to 6 p.m. and Thursday 3 to 9 p.m.
Events: Breakfast on the first **Sunday** of each month from 9 to 11 a.m.; euchre on the second **Sunday** of each month at 12:30 p.m.
Shuffleboard every **Thursday** from 7 to 9 p.m.
Music and jam session ever second **Saturday** of the month from 1 to 4 p.m. Everyone welcome.

EVENTS

April 11, 4:30-6:30 p.m. Haliburton United Church presents the 2nd annual pancake supper at 10 George St. in Haliburton. There is no charge, but donations will be accepted. Everyone welcome. For more information call 705-457-1891

April 11, all day. The Haliburton Documentary Film Festival – also known as Doc(k) Day – is running at the Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion. There are four features on the slate this year, promoting positive and inspiring stories born in Canada. Tickets for each documentary are $10 or $35 for the full day. Available online at www.zeffy.com/en-CA/ticketing/dock-day-2026.

April 11, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Haliburton School of Art + Design is hosting its spring open house. Learn about certificate and diploma art programs and year-round course opportunities, tour the school and residence, check out studios, and take part in a hands-on fabric brooch workshop, starting at noon.

April 12, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. SIRCH Repair Café returns, running at the bistro and bakery located at 49 Maple Ave. in Haliburton. From small appliances to household items, volunteer fixers will do their best to help bring things back to life. Running every second Sunday of the month until October.

April 12, 2 p.m. Razzamataz Kids' Shows closes out its 2026 season with Chris McKhool, who brings his 'Earth, Seas and Air' show to the Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion. Tickets are $10 for adults and $7 for children.

April 13, 7 to 9 p.m. The Baha'I community of Haliburton County is hosting its monthly community coffee house. Come to learn about the science of happiness and how one can develop helpful habits. Presentation led by Peter Smith with music from Jeff Moulton to follow. No admission charge, light refreshments will be provided. For more information call 416-606-9657.

April 17, 6:30 p.m. Point in Time Centre for Children, Youth and Parents is hosting a fundraising dance at Highland Hills United Church in Minden. Music provided by Adverse Conditions. Refreshments available be donation during admission. Tickets are $25 in advance and $30 at the door. Available online at Eventbrite.ca, at 69 Eastern Ave. in Haliburton during office hours, or by calling 705-286-1470.

April 18, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Stop by the Haliburton School of Art + Design to see what students and alumni have been creating lately at the college's 'We Made It' end-of-term exhibit.

April 24, 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Open door at SIRCH Bistro and Bakery. Feeling disconnected? New to the community? Carrying a lot? Come out to this new monthly drop-in for free coffee, conversation and connection. No presentations or expectations. Taking place on the last Friday of every month.

April 26, 2 p.m. Wild Honey Hoedown at the Haliburton Legion. This annual springtime fundraiser for the Johnny Burke Foundation features country acts Stephen Francis, Jamie Oliver, Christine Vaillancourt and Scott McGregor. Tickets are $25 and available at ticketscene.ca or by calling Teresa (705-455-7252) or the legion (705-457-2571).

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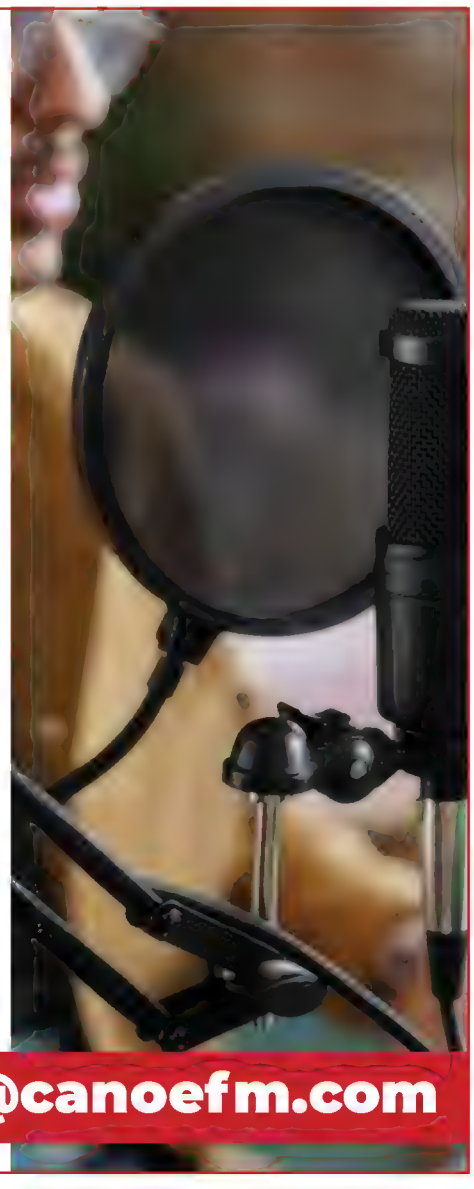

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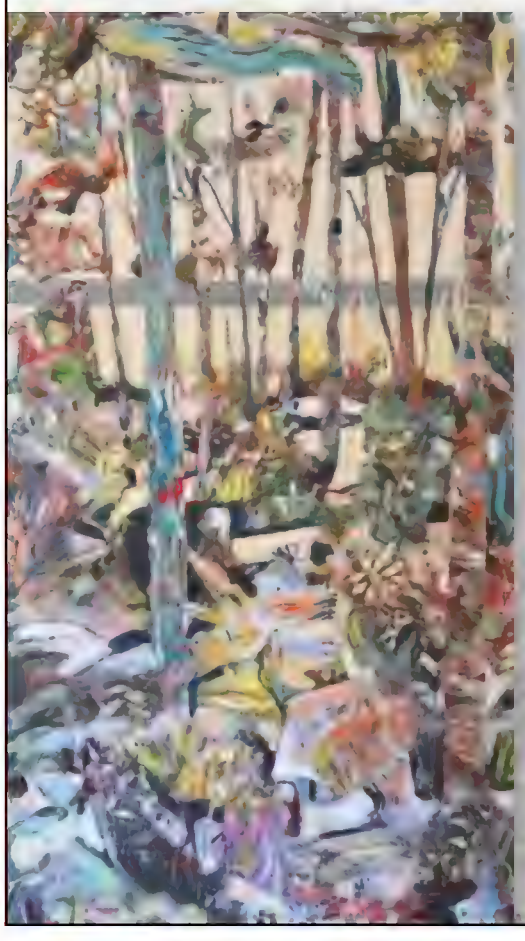


Punch Up hilarious and heartwarming

By Lisa Gervais

Youth theatre company, Ctrl-ART-Del is returning to one of its favourite playwrights as it gets set for a spring production of *Punch Up*.

The work of Kat Sandler, who wrote *Mustard* performed two seasons ago, has been chosen again.

Spokesperson Christine Carr said they selected this play for several reasons.

Punch Up features a cast of three. In the play, Duncan has always been a pretty boring guy, leading a simple life while working at a bread factory. He stumbles upon Brenda, a sad young woman who's about to end her life. Convinced he's fallen in love, Duncan strikes up a desperate deal: if he can get her to laugh, she'll give life another shot, but if she doesn't even giggle, he'll help her go through with her plan.

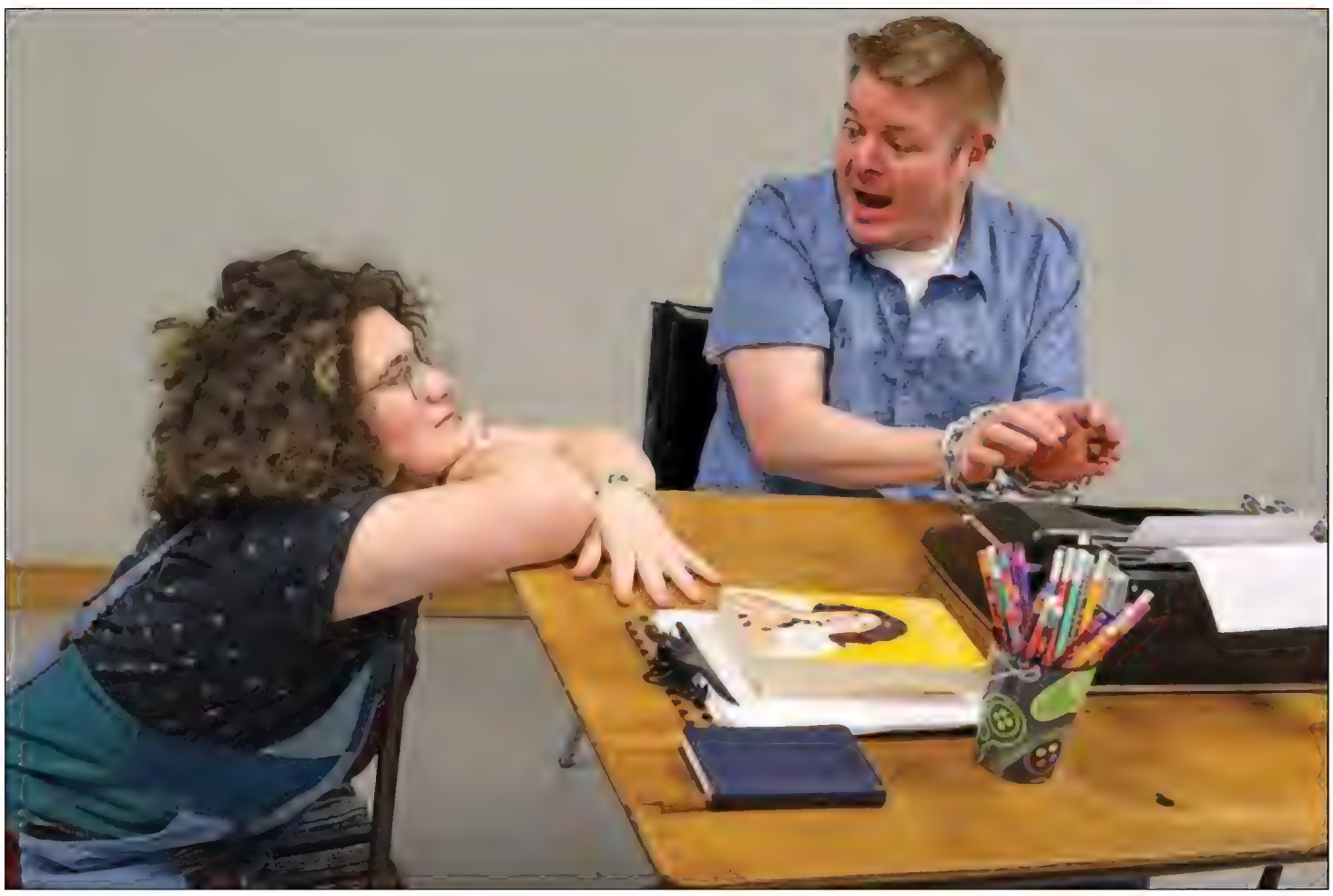
There's just one catch: Duncan isn't funny. So, he borrows Pat, his second-favourite comedian, to help him come up with the perfect routine. But Pat is having a hard time mustering his sense of humour after a bad break-up.

Carr said Sandler's plays are witty and entertaining, but reflect the real world and its many challenges.

"It allows the cast to delve into deeper themes in very relatable ways, and that comes through to the audience. They will be entertained, will absolutely laugh, but hopefully will also be made to think," she said

Asked about a theme of suicide ideation, Carr said, "a scary part of today's world is how real and prevalent these challenging themes already are in society. That reality is paralleled in many of the works we choose to produce. As with any of our plays, we focus on creating safe spaces where the cast can explore the themes and topics, knowing they have support."

She said *Punch Up* examines how people can fight the darkness by finding love and laughter in their life. "It explores the importance of connection."



Spencer Zumpano and Chris Chumbley rehearse a scene in Punch Up. *Submitted.*

The cast features some familiar faces: Chris Chumbley, Sophie Lee and Spencer Zumpano.

Chumbley plays Pat. Carr said, "Chris perfectly embodies Pat, the bitter yet hilarious cynical comedian. This role allows him to showcase his comedic timing and his capacity to embody the character, no matter how damaged they may be."

Zumpano plays Duncan. "Spencer previously played this role during our youth scene study and connected well with the character. He pairs his love of comedy with his acting experience to bring an unintentionally hilarious and awkward character to life," Carr said.

Lee plays Brenda. Carr said, "Sophie's character has experienced true heartbreak and loss and Sophie brings these challenging emotions to life, countering Duncan's comedic nature. She helps ground the production and has stepped up perfectly into a more serious role."

Carr encourages folks to check the play out.

"This play is hilarious yet also heartwarming. It explores the importance of love and connection in what can be at times a challenging world. While the play tackles serious topics, it is one that has left us dying of laughter throughout the rehearsal process. We are very excited to see the audience react to the play's humour and life."

Recommended for ages 13+ due to the serious nature of the themes and language. The play is April 16-18, 7:30 p.m., at the Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion. Tickets are available on-line (tickets.ctrlartdel.ca) or at the door.

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COUNCIL MEETINGS VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON

Council and Closed Session meetings are currently being conducted in-person (Council Chambers, 7 Milne St., Minden) and with electronic participation. The scheduled upcoming meetings are:

- April 16 – Special Council Meeting
- April 30 – Special Council Meeting

Members of the Public are invited to observe Council proceedings by attending in-person or via the live-stream link.

ARE YOU REGISTERED TO VOTE?

Confirm you are on the Voters List! The next municipal election will be held on Monday, October 26, 2026. To register and/or confirm your information visit the Elections Ontario Register Voter Portal www.registertovoteon.ca/

Need assistance? Visit election staff at the Administration building (7 Milne St.) Monday-Friday during regular business hours.

A MESSAGE FROM COMMUNITY SERVICES

- Cemetery clean-up will be taking place from April 18 - April 30, 2026.
- A new session of fitness classes is starting at the SG Nesbitt Memorial Arena. Register online or in person at the SG Nesbitt Memorial Arena administration desk,

(705) 286-1936 ext. 554. www.mindenhills.ca/recreation

EARTH DAY CLEAN UP

Join us on April 22 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. for a community litter cleanup along our beautiful riverwalk and downtown core. Be part of the effort to keep our community litter-free while celebrating Earth Day.

To participate in this great initiative, please register by scanning the QR code.

MINDEN HILLS CULTURAL CENTRE

- The UnFinished Objects (UFO) craft group will meet on Friday, April 10 from 1:00 to 3:00 PM. Join other local crafters in the Welch Room to work on your neglected projects. All are welcome.
- Join us for the Artist Talk and Reception for our new exhibit Mute Eloquence of Light: Arctic Works by Janet Read, on Saturday, April 11 from 1:00 – 3:00 pm. All are welcome, refreshments will be served. Admission is by donation. The exhibit will be on display until May 23.

The Gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Admission is by donation. For information on all the programs and exhibits offered at the Minden Hills Cultural Centre: culturalcentre@mindenhills.ca or call 705-286-3763.

7 Milne Street, PO Box 359, Minden, ON, K0M 2K0 | Phone: 705-286-1260 · Toll Free 1-844-277-1260 · Fax: 705-286-4917

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Send cover letter and resume to info@hchba.ca

MUNICIPALITY OF HIGHLANDS EAST — Yours to Explore — highlandseast.ca

Summer Employment Opportunities

The Municipality of Highlands East is currently recruiting students for summer employment opportunities for the 2026 year.

If you are currently enrolled in secondary school or a post-secondary program and returning to school in the fall of 2026, you are encouraged to apply for an opportunity.

The following positions are available with the municipality:

- (2) Summer Parks & Recreation Attendant (Parks & Property Department – 16 weeks; 35 hours/week)
- (1) Records Management Clerk (Administration Department – 16 weeks; 35 hours/week)
- (1) Information Centre Student (Economic Development Department – 16 weeks; 35 hours/week)
- (2) Summer Landfill Attendants (Public Works Department – 16 weeks; 35 hours/week)
- (4) Various Lifeguard Positions (Summer Swim Program – 8 weeks)

Please note, for positions where you may be required to drive in the execution of your duties, a Class G2 or G Driver's Licence is mandatory. You will also be required to provide an acceptable driver's abstract and a criminal reference check.

Most positions listed above are available from the beginning of May through to the end of August for a total of 16 weeks. The Lifeguard positions are for a total of 8 weeks only.

If you are interested in receiving a more detailed job description for one of the positions noted above, please email tvader@highlandseast.ca requesting a copy of the specific posting.

If you are interested in applying, applications **clearly marked with the position you are applying for** may be submitted on or before 12:00 p.m, Wednesday, April 15th, 2026, via email, in person, mail or fax. Interested applicants may submit their resume, in confidence to:

Tracy Vader, HR/Payroll Coordinator
Municipality of Highlands East
P.O. Box 295, 2249 Loop Road
Wilberforce, ON K0L 3C0
Fax: 705-448-2532 E-Mail: humanresources@highlandseast.ca

We thank all applicants for their interest but only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

The Municipality of Highlands East is an equal opportunity employer. Applicants requiring accommodation are asked to contact the HR/Payroll Coordinator.

In accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the information gathered will be used solely for candidate selection purposes only. Questions about this collection should be directed to Tracy Vader, HR/Payroll Coordinator.

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Haliburton Highlands and surrounding areas Highlandgreeneries@hotmail.com 705-455-2813 / 705-455-2156

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FOR SALE – GUILFORD FIREWOOD – Nicely cut and split, ready to burn. $140. per face cord – pick up. Delivery available, call 705-754-3034

FOR SALE - Native pollinator plants for sale. Visit haliburton micromeadows.ca or email Baz Conlin at haliburtonmm@gmail.com for more info. Pre-sales running until April 20th.

FOR RENT

FOR RENT - One bedroom upper level apartment, screened porch, satellite TV, walking distance to downtown, schools & hospital. No pets, non-smoker, $1,500.00 per month includes heat, hydro, a/c and satellite TV. Call 705-455-9878

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J & D TOWING & SERVICE STATION - will pay top dollar for scrap cars. We also provide towing services as well as flat bed. Call Jim 705-447-2113

WANTED – Looking for someone to deliver Bolaris Tractor from Gelert to home on Ben Road, ALSO looking for key bars for fencing. Contact 705-286-3823 or samuriron@hotmail.com

WANTED

WANTED – My lady & I would like to have someone come to our house 1 – 2 times per week for massage. Older adults and require this for circulation benefits. Call 705-286-3823

HELP WANTED

Employment Opportunity, Gull River Golf Club Grounds Crew/Maintenance Member. Please visit our website gullrivergolfclub.com for more information. Email events@gullrivergolfclub.com or Call 905-317-8715

NOTICE

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS MEETINGS - Sundays - 10:30 am at St. Anthony's, 27 Victoria Street Haliburton. Wednesdays - 7:00 PM at Highland Hills United Church, 21 Newcastle St. in Minden - rear door. Thinking about alcohol. Thinking about stopping. We've been there. We can help!

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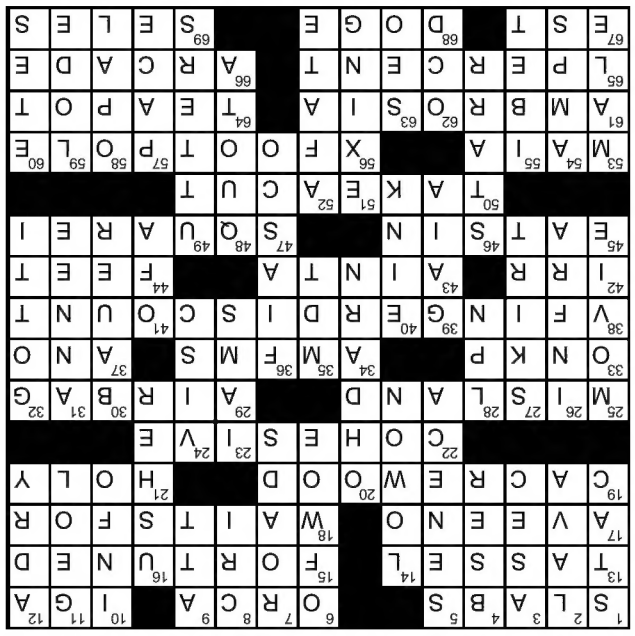

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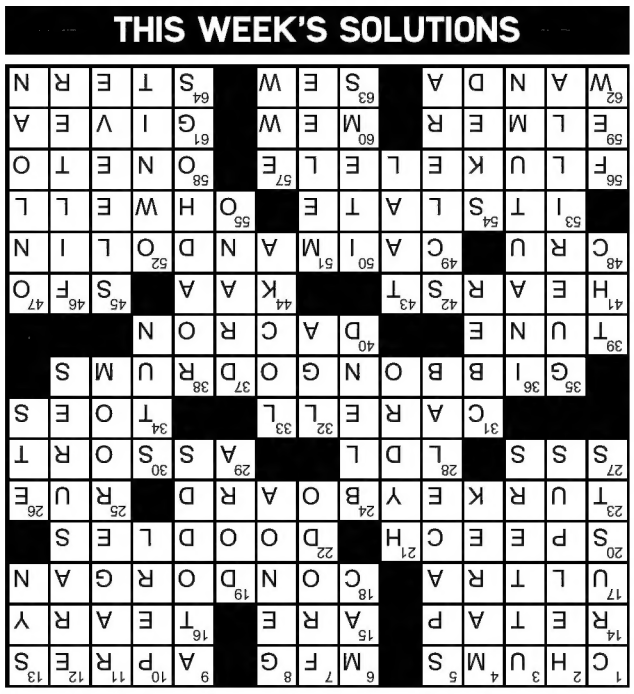

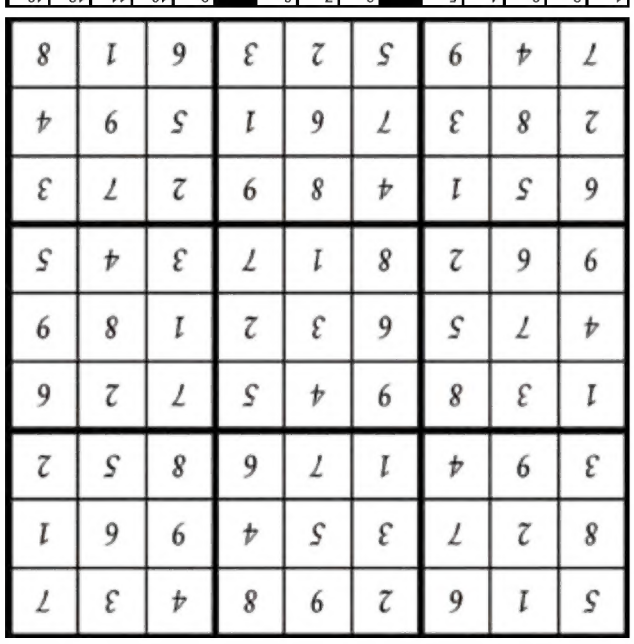

HELP WANTED

HALIBURTON HIGHLANDS HEALTH SERVICES FOUNDATION

We are hiring!

Event Coordinators
Canada Summer Jobs

The Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation is currently recruiting for TWO enthusiastic students to work with us!

Over the summer you will assist with planning and executing fundraising events, donor stewardship, data management and community engagement.

Interested applicants should forward resumes to foundation@hhhs.ca
by 3pm Friday, April 24, 2026

Full job description available at hhhs.ca/career-opportunities

*Open to those who qualify for Canada Summer Jobs

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Visit www.haliburtonsculptureforest.ca for full job description and criteria.

Submit Letter of Interest and CV by April 17 to info@haliburtonsculptureforest.ca

OBITUARY

In loving memory of

George Lazier

Peacefully at Haliburton Highlands Health Services Hospital on Friday, March 27, 2026.

George Lazier, age 66 years, loving son of Johanna and the late Frank Lazier. Dear father of Corrisa Lazier. Brother of Linda (Brian Thompson). Fond uncle of Ryan Lazier (Tammy), Tiffany Thompson and Herb Thompson (Kayla).

George's family received family and friends at the M. G. Daly Funeral Home, 200 Old Hastings Rd., Maynooth on Tuesday, April 7, 2026 from 12:00 – 1:00 pm. Funeral service followed in the Chapel at 1:00 pm.

As expressions of sympathy, donations to Diabetes Canada would be appreciated by the family. Arrangements entrusted to M.G. Daly Funeral Home, Maynooth. (613) 338-3259 (Condolence messages may be e-mailed to dalyfuneralhome@bellnet.ca or visit www.mgdalyfuneralhome.com).

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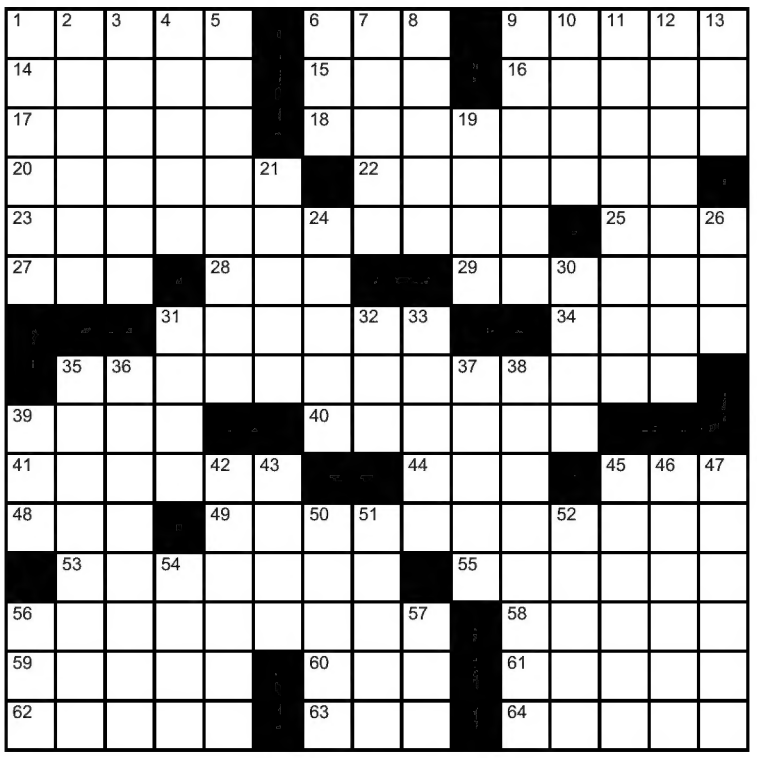

Across

1 Buddies
6 Factory work: Abbr.
9 ___-ski (chalet chill time)
14 Draw from again, as a maple tree
15 Texter's r, in full
16 With watery eyes
17 Prefix with violet or sound
18 Church instrument built for vultures?
20 Valedictorian's address
22 Marginal artwork?
23 Piano built for gobblers?
25 Wish one hadn't
27 Whistling-kettle sound
28 "Bad" cholesterol, briefly
29 Arrange by type
31 Actor Steve of "The Office"
34 Stubbed digits
35 Percussion instruments built for monkeys?
39 Couldn't carry a ___ in a bucket (was tonedeaf)
40 Fibre fill fabric
41 Kidnapping target Patty, 1974
44 30-foot-long Kipling character
45 Airport north of LAX
48 Fine wine word
49 Small guitar built for small crocs?
53 "Gotta go, I'll miss my curfew"
55 "That's how it goes, I guess"
56 Hawaiian instrument built for flounders?
58 "On a scale of ___ ten..."
59 "___ Gantry" (Burt Lancaster film)
60 "Feed the kitty" call?
61 Words with hoot or hand
62 "A Fish Called ___"
63 Do a darn thing
64 Radio personality Howard

Down

1 Pie's top and bottom
2 "We're in trouble, S.O.S.!"
3 Vocalizes
4 Zidlicky of the NHL
5 NASA shuttle testing site
6 Alberta oil town Fort ___, for short
7 Tolkien "Precious" bearer
8 Christopher Columbus's birthplace
9 Disagreeing
10 Programming language
11 Venue for screaming and smashing objects
12 Blackboard wipeouts
13 Ant. antonym
19 Animated explorer
21 Dam-generated power
24 Wine combo such as cab-sav
26 Area 51 subjects, some say
30 Bowl over
31 "Breaker, breaker 1-9" speaker
32 Alternative to JFK
33 Opa-___, Florida
35 Warfare type that sounds like an ape: Var.
36 When Virgos and Libras are born
37 Liquid-Plumr rival
38 Drivers who think they own the highway
39 Marijuana bud compound, briefly
42 Eye membrane
43 Manila volcano
45 Rolled-up shirt part
46 Crude loudmouth's lack
47 Out, at the library
50 "Hot" couples
51 Bench clearing brawl
52 Take responsibility for
54 Timetable, for short
56 "Chosen" group
57 "Yuck!"

Looking for ladies that played soft-ball multiple years from 1960-89!

The Haliburton County Ladies Softball League are being honoured in the Haliburton County Hall of Fame!

Please contact me if you played and can attend. **Induction is 2pm, May 23rd.**
Also looking for action shots, please send to: **cheryl_greg4@hotmail.com**

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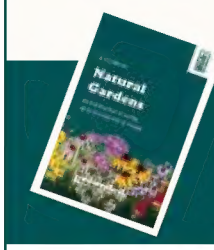

For a free guide to natural gardens in Haliburton County, visit groundedgardens.ca.

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2 | 3 | 23.65 Acres | MLS X12953212

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2 | 4

Little Boshkung
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2 | 4

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2 | 3

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